

Watford friendly is on

WYCOMBE Wanderers have arranged a friendly against Third Division Watford on New Year's Day (Wednesday) at Loakes Park. This will be their final match before Saturday's big Cup tie against Middlesbrough.

The friendly with Watford, arranged by the two managers Brian Lee and Mike Keen, will kick off at 2 p.m. This is because the timing of the floodlighting cannot be changed.

Watford boss Mike Keen is included in the team to play, along with five other regular first teamers. The Watford 12 is: M. Dalrymple, T. How, J. Walsh, J. Cocks, G. Bristow, W. Lees, L. McGettigan, M. Keen, K. Mercer, L. Markham, G. Johnson, P. Corfield.

Amersham Town also stage a game on Wednesday when they visit Tring while Chalfont St. Peter travel to Farnborough Town. Both are Spartan League matches.

The pro's and cons of 'open' football

THE Rothmans Isthmian League will be fully represented at the special Football Association meeting in relation to players' status on January 27 when, it is expected, open football will be "legalised."

The League's officers have impressed on member clubs the importance of attending this vital meeting, and arrangements have been made for proxy votes should any club be unable to go at the last minute. The F.A. solicitors have amended the rules of the Association, bringing them up to date, and although it looks as if "Shamateurism" will, at last, be a thing of the past, there could be some last minute snags.

Clubs such as Dulwich Hamlet, Leatherhead, Kingstonian and Sutton United have restrictions on their ground preventing professionalism, but these will certainly be altered.

"We definitely feel that when it happens we will have to turn professional," said Peter Molloy, the Sutton United chairman. "We have a slight ground problem regarding the lease with the council which permits only amateur football, as such, but if there are no amateurs we can get it amended. I think this will be a good thing only if it stops all the close season poaching of players."

The arrival of open football in the leagues that have gone it alone, has brought many problems in its wake, and several clubs have had to organise a thorough costing. As usual, reserve teams were the first to suffer with many of them being scrapped. They cost around £1,000 a year to run, and some clubs feel the money should be used for strengthening the first team. Redhill pulled theirs out of the Suburban League recently despite a £50 fine. There is the other side of the coin as was revealed recently when Staines transferred John Love to Crystal Palace for £4,000 down, and the promise of more later.

Several clubs believe that with a young reserve side, properly managed they too, could produce players up to Football League standard. The transfer fees involved could more than cover the cost of a reserve team.

Enfield have finally got a licence for their new Restaurant-cum-

nightclub, and it opened last week. The restaurant, which holds 350, and has cost chairman Tom Unwin an estimated £170,000 in the five months it has taken to build, is reputed to put many top nightclubs to shame. The Barron Knights group will be seeing in the New Year there, and it is expected to be a terrific money spinner. Enfield are expecting a big increase in rent and rates.

Harrow Borough, who officially opened their new floodlights against an Arsenal team last week, are being inundated with applications for membership to their new £240,000 sports complex. They already have a vice-president's club, approaching the 50 mark, and look certain to be a force in football shortly.

Walthamstow Avenue are already team building for next season. "We are out of most cups, and in the middle of the league," said secretary Norman Moss. "So we thought it was time to rebuild the side. You can't do it while you are at the top nor when you are at the bottom."

Walthamstow have signed goalkeeper Peter Carman from Southern League club, Maidstone United, and centre half Tony Parish, who has been released by West Ham. They played in a friendly against Luton in midweek.

Willie Flood, the midfield player told by Dagenham to find another club, has returned to Tilbury. Flood, recently recovered from a cartilage operation, was seven seasons with the "Dockers" before joining Dagenham 18 months ago. Horsham have retained former Brighton and West Ham striker, Bertie Lutton, for a further four weeks. Due to injury he played in only one match in his first month with the Sussex club.

News of Laurie Churchill, the former Hendon and Enfield winger, who turned professional with Chelsea before linking up with Tommy Lawrence again at Slough. He is back with Dave Sexton, now at Queens Park Rangers. A taxi cab driver, he works in the evenings, and helps Rangers out during the day in a scouting capacity. John Clary, the Corinthian Casuals striker who was under surveillance by several league clubs earlier this season, is back in light training after ligament trouble.